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THE F.B.I. — SCOTLAND YARD — NORTHWEST MOUNTED — SECRET SERVICE !

MANHUNT

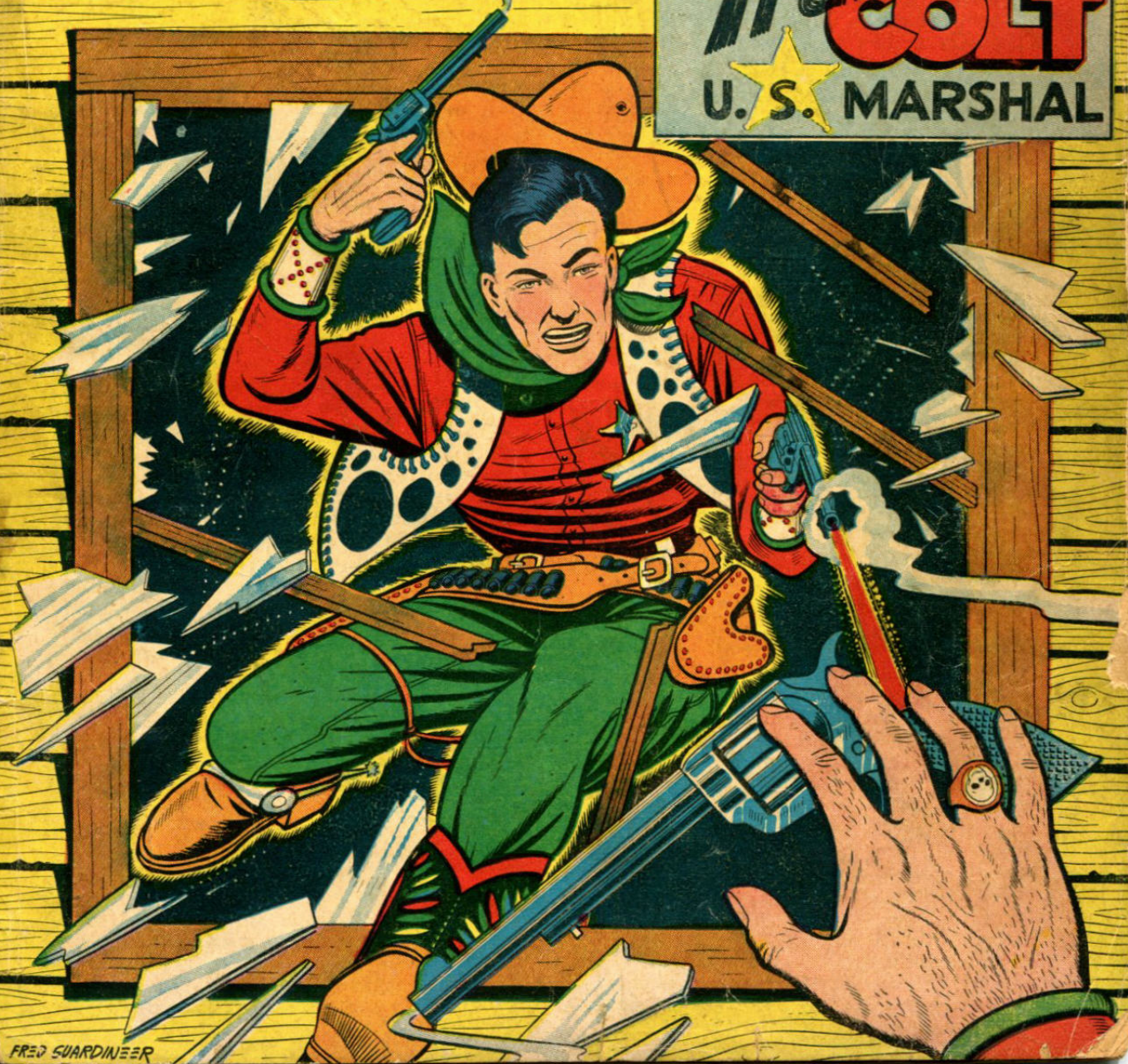
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10c

INTRODUCING

"Trail" **COLT**
★ U.S. MARSHAL



FRED GUARDINEER



WEB COMIC
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HAND OF THE DEAD

by Gardner F. Fox

THE METALLIC chatter of a submachine-gun broke the early morning silence. Trigger Bennett's hat fell forward over his eyes. He coughed just once . . . a thin trickle of blood flowed from the corner of his mouth.

Lefty didn't bother to examine the Trigger. Without another word he crawled back to the spot behind the ashcan where Pretty-Boy Mahoney sat hunched.

"Trigger just got his, boss!" he murmured, gesturing in the direction of the Trigger's body. "With Wee Willie croaked back in the bank and Muscles Miranda tryin' to take a powder on us so's I had to administer a little lead into his back . . . dat leaves on'y da two of us still alive! And with th' coppers banging away at us with a coupla Tommyguns there ain't gonna be any of us left in a coupla minutes . . . if we don't amscray fast!"

"You're right, Lefty," said Pretty-Boy, between clenched teeth. "Some job this turned out to be . . . an' it was supposed to be a soft touch, too! Trouble is Pretty-Boy Mahoney is too popular a name with the flatfeet these days. Let this be a lesson to you, Lefty . . . try to stay out of the Number One slot on the Public Enemy list!"

The snort of machinegun fire echoed down the alley once again, and Pretty-Boy staggered to his feet, using the brick wall behind him as a support. His right arm dangled uselessly at his side.

"They got us like rats in a hole, boss . . . unless we bust into the back door of this house and get up to the roof," said Lefty, jerking his thumb in the direction of the dark building across the alleyway.

"Let's make a break for it," muttered Pretty-Boy, his face grimacing with pain. "This slug they put in my shoulder aches something awful, and at the rate I'm bleeding I'll be dry in an hour or so. I gotta get to a sawbones pronto and get patched up!"

Lefty Foster crawled across the alleyway on his stomach and tried the doorknob of the back door. They were in luck . . . the door swung inward noiselessly. Lefty dashed back across the alley and half-pushed, half-carried Pretty-Boy into the doorway. As the door slammed shut behind them they heard a farewell volley from the machineguns at the other end of the alley.

So far, so good! They had slipped by the police . . . at least momentarily. Now to get up to the roof and across the tenements to another building. Then down a back stairway and they would have completely circled around the cops!

It took them half an hour to get back into the street, and when they did Pretty-Boy was almost out on his feet from loss of blood. They had to get to a doctor quickly.

"There's a sawbones on the next block," Lefty whispered to Pretty-Boy, as they turned up their coat collars and started down the street.

"There it is," said Lefty, pointing to a brownstone house in the middle of the block. "Doctor Pullman, Surgeon. Hold on just a coupla more minutes, boss, and we'll have you inside and safe!"

Pretty-Boy bit his lip in pain and merely nodded. His face was livid and he leaned heavily on Lefty as they climbed the steep flight of stone steps to the front door of the Doctor's house.

A short, stocky man in a white smock answered Lefty's insistent ringing of the doorbell. He stood uncertainly in the doorway for a moment, but one glance at Pretty-Boy's face was sufficient evidence that this was an emergency.

"Come right in," he said, holding the door open so that Lefty could steer Pretty-Boy into the hallway. "First door on your right. Get his coat off and stretch him out on the table. I'll be with you in a second."

Lefty whistled softly as he looked at the coagulated blood on Pretty-Boy's shoulder, after he had ripped off the other's coat and helped him up to the doctor's table.

"Now dontcha worry, boss," he counselled Pretty-Boy. "Dis guy'll have the slug out in a minute and then we can look for a place to hide out while the heat's still on us. You're gonna be all right, Pretty-Boy . . . 'cause I didn't pick out any ordinary sawbones to fix you up. It says here that this mugg's a 'Plastic Surgeon' . . . whatever *that* is!"

Pretty-Boy mumbled softly to himself, and the trace of a smile began to play around the corners of his mouth.

The Doctor walked briskly into the room, adjusting a pair of clean rubber gloves as he approached the table. "Of course I'll have to notify the police about this," he said, as he began to probe skilfully for the bullet in Pretty-Boy's shoulder. "Routine, you know. We have to report all instances of wounds of this nature."

And with that he held his forceps high in the air. A cylindrical piece of lead glistened dully in the shaft of light from the bulb overhead.

"That does it," he said in a matter-of-fact voice, as he applied gauze and tape to the wound. "Clean as a whistle. You just rest here for a moment while . . ."

(Continued on inside back cover)

"Trail" COLT

U.S. MARSHAL

A MAN STAGGERS BLINDLY ACROSS THE BAKING INFERNO OF THE PAINTED DESERT. HIS RIGHT HAND IS BALLED INTO A TIGHT FIST, AS IF AFRAID TO OPEN. IN HIS MIND BURNS ONE THOUGHT... REVENGE! AND RIDING TO MEET HIM IS "TRAIL" COLT, UNITED STATES MARSHAL. BOTH GUNS LOOSE IN THEIR HOLSTERS AGAINST THE THREAT OF EL DIABLO...

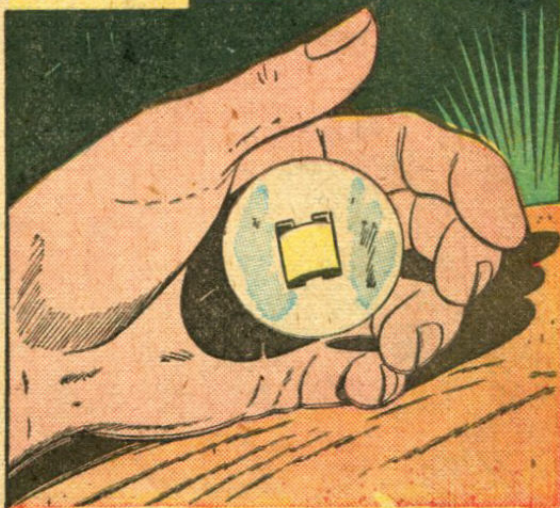
"THE DESERT DEVIL"



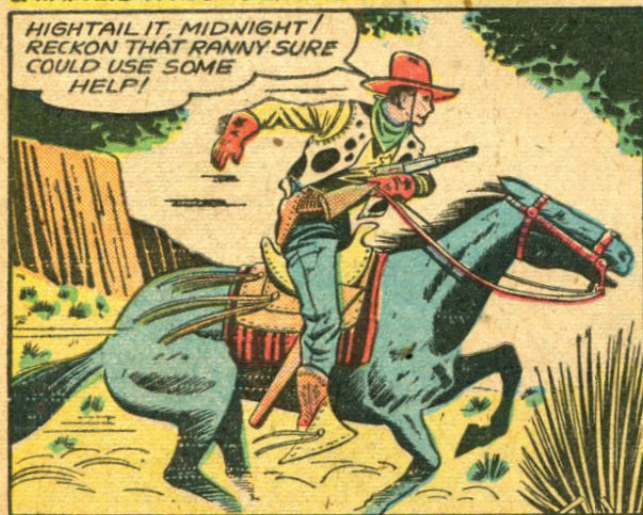
HIS VOICE HOARSE AND VIBRANT WITH DESPAIR, CHUCK BOLTON MUTTERS AS HIS LEGS GIVE WAY AND HE PITCHES FORWARD... HIS HAND OPENS UP. A SILVER CONCHA LIES IN HIS PALM...



THE DEVIL... DID ME IN... FOR KEEPS. NO WATER... SHOT UP... NO CHANCE TO GET EVEN! TO WEAK... TO WALK...



IN THE QUIVERING HEAT WAVES A GRIM FORM CATAPULTS A HUGE BLACK STALLION FORWARD...



HIGHTAIL IT, MIDNIGHT! RECKON THAT RANNEY SURE COULD USE SOME HELP!

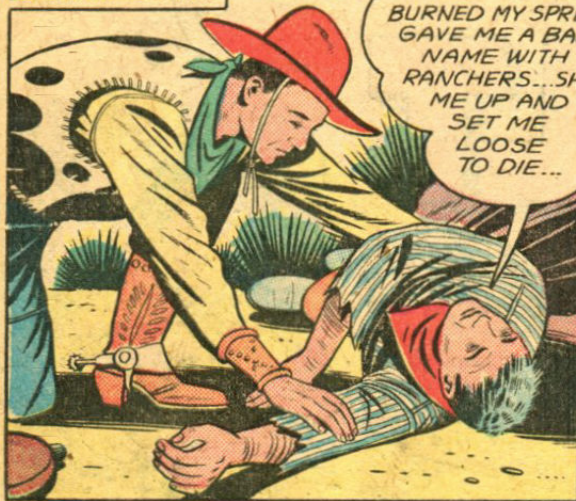


EASY THERE, PARDNER. GOT TO DRINK SLOW WHEN YUH'VE GONE WITHOUT WATER A LONG TIME...

EL DIABLO. GOT TO GET EL DIABLO!!

MANHUNT

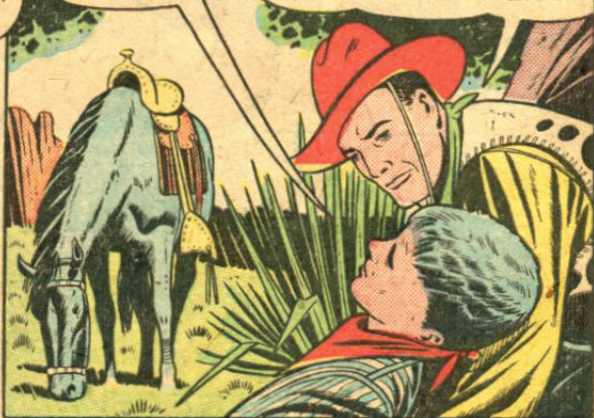
LIPS THIN, EYES NARROWED, "TRAIL" LISTENS TO THE DELIRIOUS BABBLINGS OF A MAN ON THE BRINK OF DEATH!



BURNED MY SPREAD. GAVE ME A BAD NAME WITH RANCHERS... SHOT ME UP AND SET ME LOOSE TO DIE...

DON'T TRY TO STOP ME! GET EL DIABLO... KILL HIM! YUH HEAR? GET AWAY... LET ME AFTER HIM...

RELAX, PARDNER. YUH TALK MY LANGUAGE, BUT EL DIABLO IS AS EASY TO FIND AS A PRAIRIE DOG WITH A GOLD TOOTH! I'M TRAILIN' HIM MYSELF!



EL DIABLO... EL DIABLO...

POOR FELLA! HE NEEDS HOME COOKIN' AND NURSIN'. RECKON I'LL DROP HIM AT THE NEAREST RANCHHOUSE.

BUT AT THE FIRST RANCH, "TRAIL" COLT IS MET WITH A LOADED RIFLE AND AN ANGRY VOICE!

YUH GET HIM OFF'N MY SPREAD! I DON'T CARE WHO YUH ARE-MARSHAL OR NOT. THAT CHUCK BOLTON IS EL DIABLO'S RIGHT HAND MAN!

WHAAAT?!

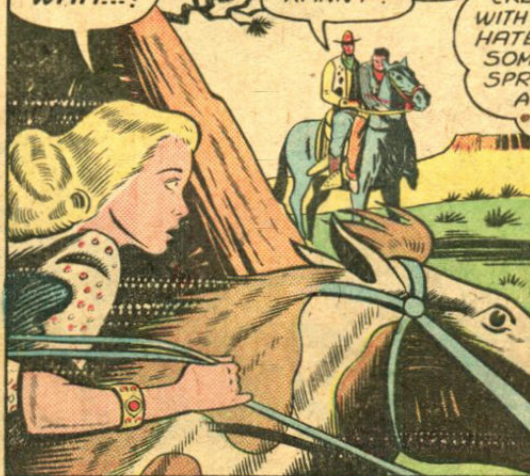
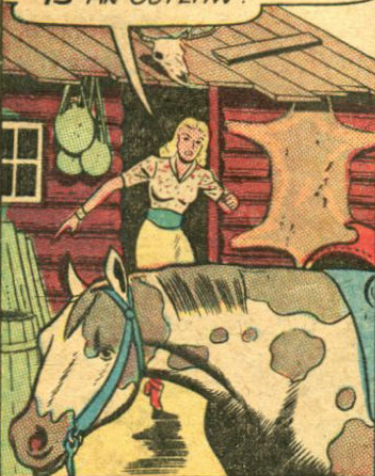


I CAN'T LET CHUCK DIE! I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM... EVEN IF HE IS AN OUTLAW!

WAIT! PLEASE WAIT...!

RECKON I WILL, MISS. YUH KNOW THIS RANNY?

HE'S A SMALL RANCHER OVER BY HEADWATER CREEK. FOLKS SAY HE WORKS WITH EL DIABLO. RANCHERS HATE HIM FOR THAT. BUT SOMEONE BURNED HIS SPREAD DOWN SOME DAYS AGO.. CHUCK THINKS EL DIABLO DID'T!



MANHUNT



IF YOU LEAVE HIM HERE, I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM UNTIL YOU BRING BANDAGES AND MEDICINE BACK FROM TOWN.

THANK, YUH, MISS. I'LL HIGH TAIL IT BACK.



BUT AS THE U.S. MARSHAL RACES ACROSS THE OCOTILLA DOTTED PLAINS.

OH, BOB! YOU SCARED ME!

SIS! I WON'T HAVE YUH TENDIN' THAT COYOTE! YUH COME WITH ME. LET HIM DIE...



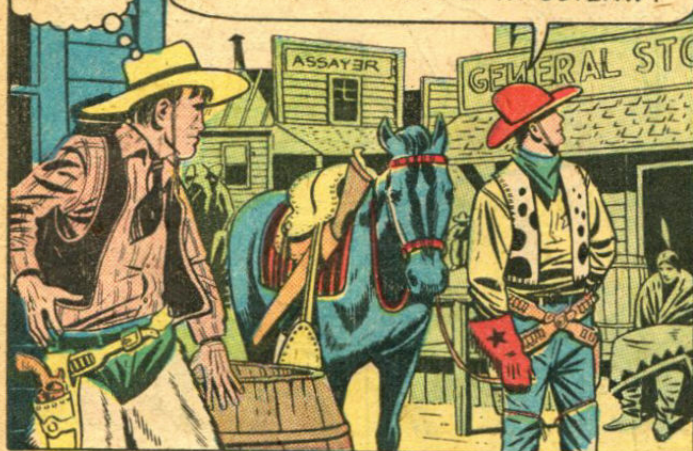
COME ON! I AIN'T TAKIN' NO FOR AN ANSWER!

LET ME GO! LET ME ALONE! BOB.. STOP IT!

IN THE TOWN OF HALF DOLLAR...

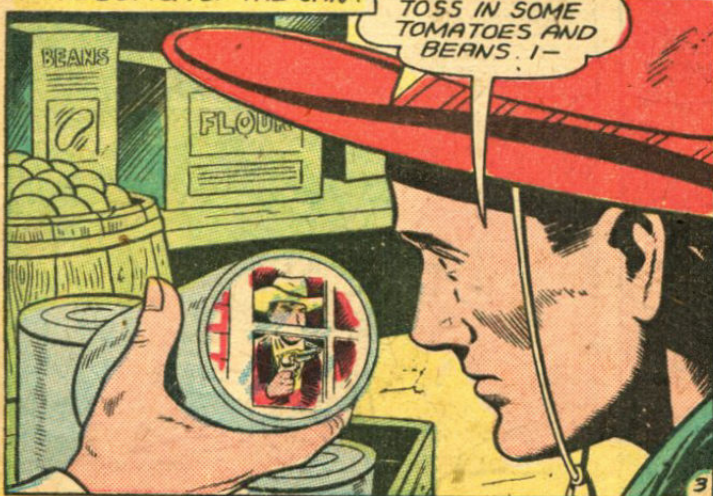
"TRAIL" COLT!

I OUGHT TO BE MANHUNTIN' AFTER EL DIABLO, BUT I CAN'T LET CHUCK DIE BACK THERE. BESIDES, I RECKON HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP LOCATE TH' OUTLAW!



THIS IS TH' END OF THE TRAIL FOR HIM--!

AS "TRAIL" WATCHES THE STOREKEEPER PLACE A TIN CAN IN HIS FOOD-BOX, HIS EYE IS CAUGHT BY A BRIGHT REFLECTION ON THE BOTTOM OF THE CAN!



TOSS IN SOME TOMATOES AND BEANS. I--

TRAIL'S HANDS DART DOWN AND UP WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING! HIS HEAVY GUNS BUCK AND ROAR...



CRASH! BROOM!

MANHUNT

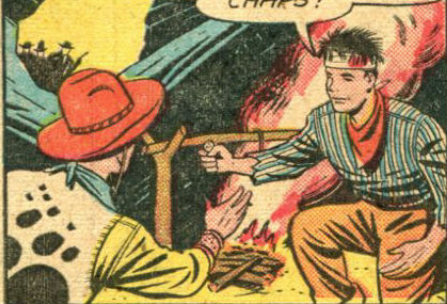
MY RANCH AIN'T BIG, BUT IT CONTROLS WATER RIGHTS TO THE OTHER RANCHES. EL DIABLO WANTED TO BUY IT IN A PROXY'S NAME, SO HE COULD MAKE THE RANCHERS PAY FOR THEIR WATER! WHEN I WOULDN'T SELL, HE SET OUT TO GET ME!

HE PASSED RUMORS AROUND THAT I WAS HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN. FOLKS BEGAN TO HATE ME. THEY WOULDN'T SELL ME FOOD. EL DIABLO GOT TIRED OF WAITIN', BURNED DOWN MY RANCH, SHOT ME UP AND DROPPED ME IN THE DESERT TO DIE... BUT BEFORE HE LEFT, I PULLED THIS SILVER CONCHA FROM HIS CHAPS!

ABSORBED IN THE YOUNG RANCHER'S STORY, "TRAIL" FAILS TO HEAR THE JINGLE OF ONCOMING SPURS UNTIL TOO LATE...

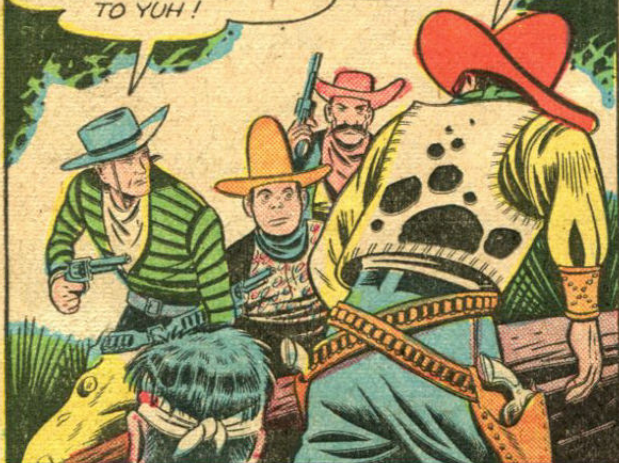
YUH DIDN'T DIE. IT'D SAVE US THE TROUBLE OF HANGING YUH! ON YORE FEET, BOLTON!

JUST A MOMENT-I'M A UNITED STATES MARSHAL!



THEN STAY OUT OF THIS. GO TAKE A RIDE, MARSHAL- AND I RECKON NO HARM WILL COME TO YUH!

I WARNED YUH...



WITH SPEED THAT DEFIES THE EYE TO FOLLOW-"TRAIL" GOES FOR HIS TWIN SIX GUNS! HIS GUNS SPIT FLAME -

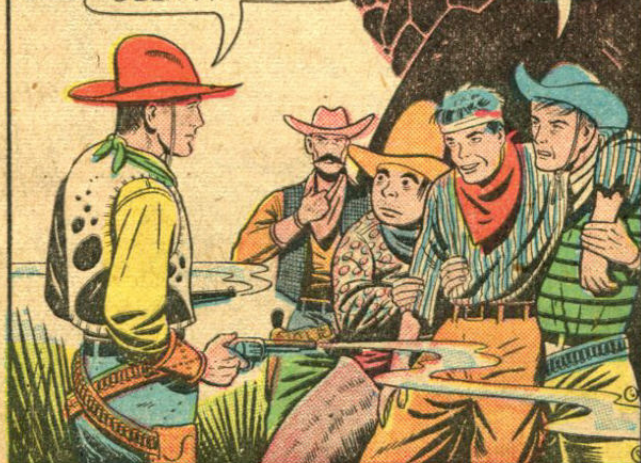
OWOO!

DON'T SHOOT MAH WAY, MARSHAL. AH'M QUITTIN'!



TAKE CARE O'CHUCK! TREAT HIM GENTLE! YUH'RE GOING TO NURSE HIM BACK TO HEALTH, DOLAN!

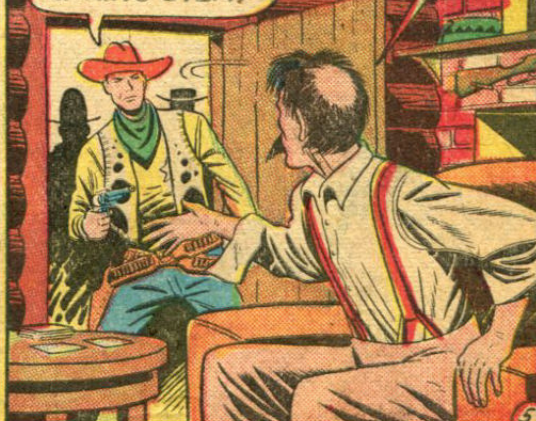
-GULP-



A LITTLE LATER THE FRONT DOOR OF THE LAZY S RANCHHOUSE BURSTS OPEN...

DON'T MAKE A MOVE, DOLAN. I'M THE GOVERNMENT, AN' THE GOVERNMENT'S TAKING OVER!

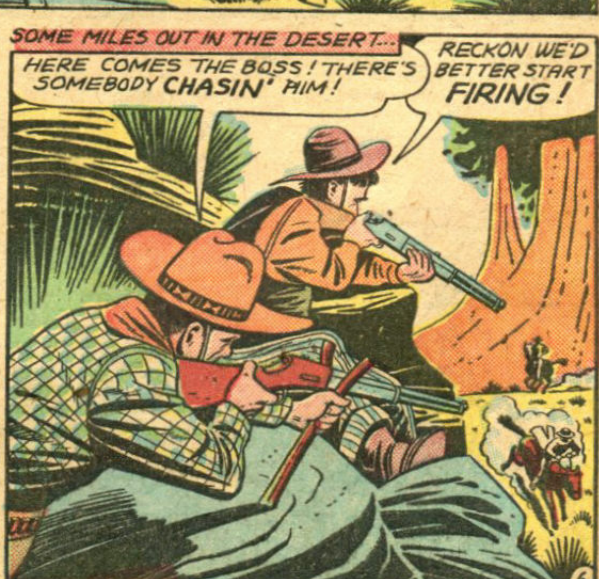
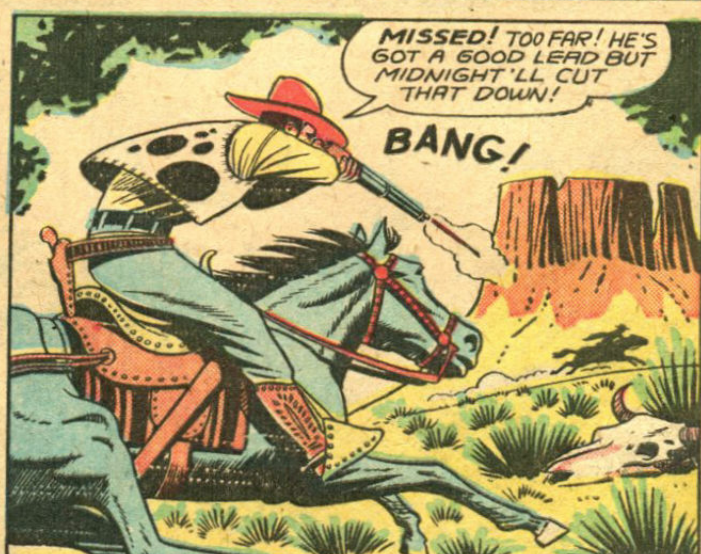
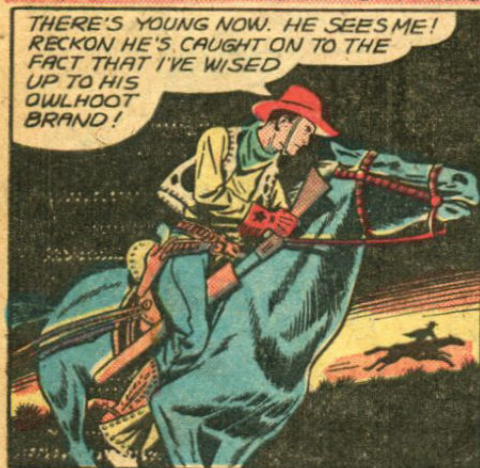
YUH SURE ARE LOCO, MARSHAL!



MANHUNT



ALL NIGHT LONG "TRAIL" COLT SENT HIS GREAT BLACK STALLION RACING ACROSS THE FLAT WESTERN PLAINS. WITH THE DAWN. HE WAS CROSSING THE K BAR SPREAD -

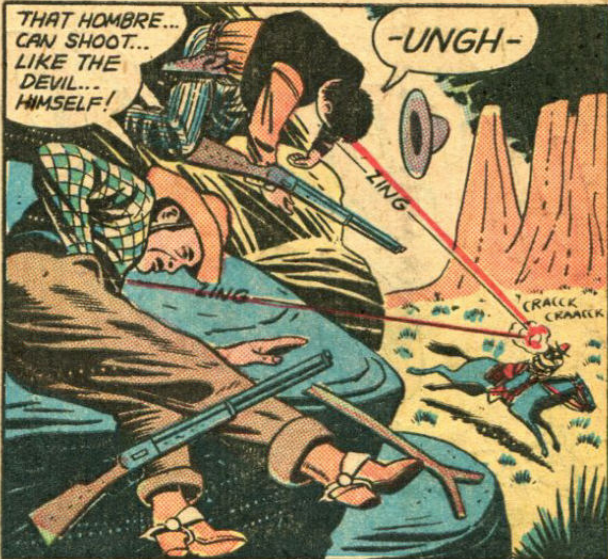


MANHUNT

SUNLIGHT GLINTING ON THE RIFLES WARNS "TRAIL" OF DANGER. HE SWERVES HIS HUGE STALLION, TIGHTENS HIS OWN TRIGGER FINGER...



THAT HOMBRE... CAN SHOOT... LIKE THE DEVIL... HIMSELF!



A WELL PLACED BULLET BRINGS EL DIABLO'S HORSE TO THE GROUND!



I'LL HIDE BEHIND TH' HORSE... THEN LET HIM TRY CLOSIN' IN ON ME!

YUH DIDN'T THINK I'D GIVE YUH A CHANCE TO TAKE COVER, DID YUH?



YOU... CAUGHT ME!

LIGHTS OUT DIABLO!

GNYAA!



SOME DAYS LATER...



RECKON YUH SHOWED US UP, MARSHAL!

EL DIABLO'S IN JAIL. HIS GANG IS BUSTED UP! THE MANHUNT'S ALL OVER!

I'M BUILDIN' A BIGGER RANCH, "TRAIL" RECKON HELEN AND MERE GONNA GET HITCHED...MAYBE RAISE A FAMILY...AND NAME THE FIRST BOY-AFTER YUH!

HIS JOB DONE, MARSHAL "TRAIL" COLT RIDES INTO THE SUNSET, GUNS AT REST - BUT READY TO FLAME AND ROAR AGAIN... WHEN THE LAW IS CHALLENGED ON THE FRONTIER BADLANDS...



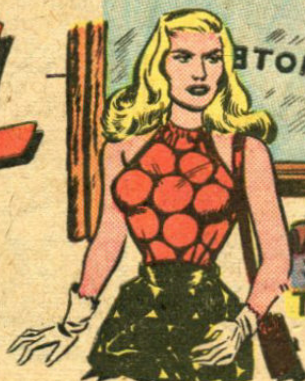
DEAR MANHUNT READERS...

THIS ISSUE BRINGS YOU "TRAIL" COLT, U.S. MARSHAL INSTEAD OF SPACE ACE! WE KNOW YOU BOYS AND GIRLS LIKE WESTERN ADVENTURE, SO WE WANT TO GIVE IT TO YOU. BUT WHAT ABOUT SPACE ACE? DROP US A POSTCARD AND TELL US YOUR FAVORITE!



MANHUNT

UNDERCOVER GIRL



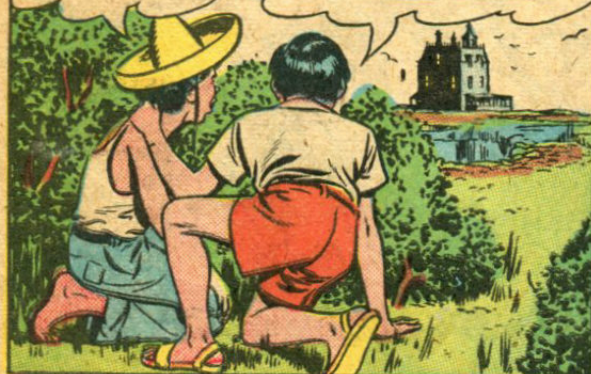
THIS IS THE HOUSE
THAT STOOD ON THE MOOR
THAT FRIGHTENED THE PEOPLE
WHO LIVED NEAR THE MAN—

WHO WANTED STARR FLAGG
TO GO TO HER DOOM IN
THE HOUSE THAT HATE BUILT!

THE HOUSE STOOD BY A MOOR NOT FAR FROM
A SMALL SOUTH AMERICAN TOWN . . .

PEOPLE GO IN—
BUT THEY NEVER
COME OUT!

MY PAPA HE SAY--JUAN,
DOAN GO NEAR THERE!
BAD THINGS HAPPEN!



YOU SEE?
THAT EES
PEDRO --
THE NEWSPAPER-
MAN!

THE SEÑOR
SAYS YOU
COME VISEET
HIM!

NO!
NO!



NOT THE HOUSE -- DON'T PUT
ME IN THERE! I'LL DO ANYTHING--
ONLY DON'T MAKE ME GO--
IN THAT HOUSE!

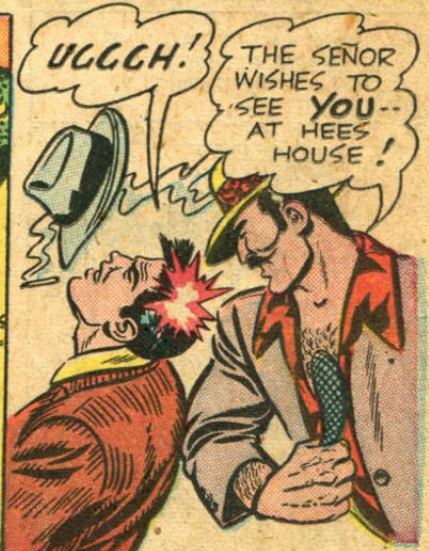
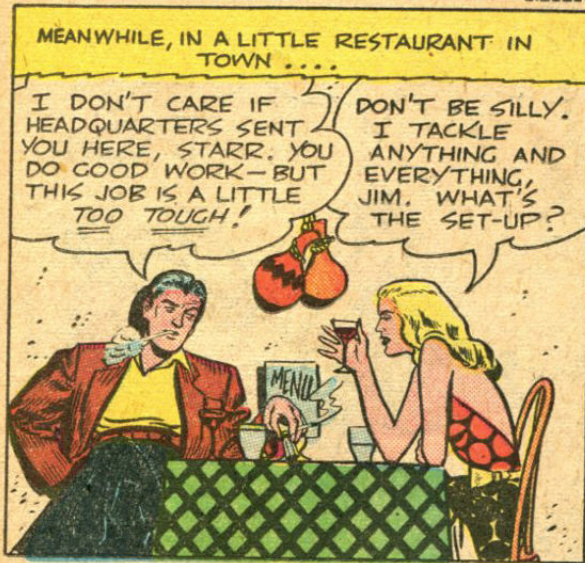


EEN YOU
GO!

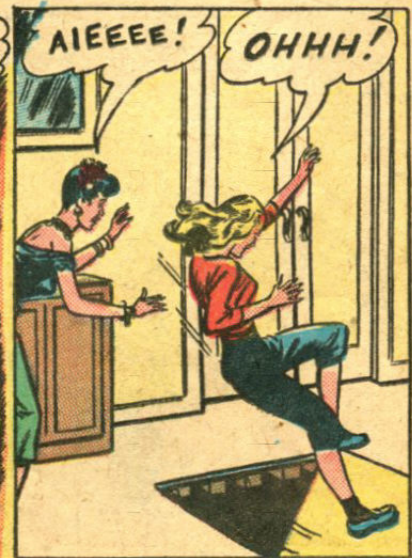
AAAAAAGGCH!!



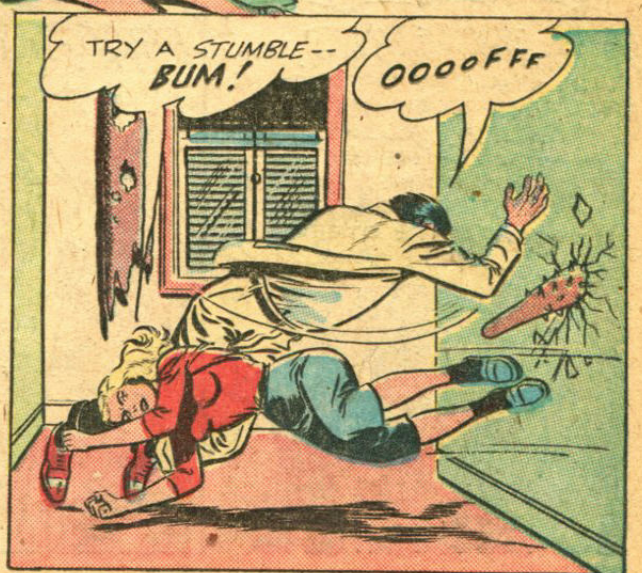
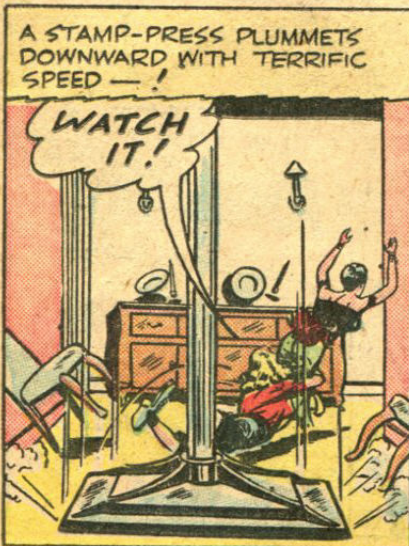
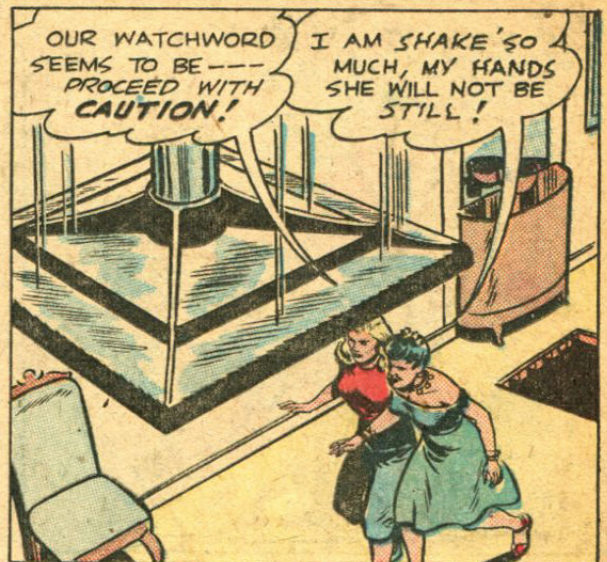
MANHUNT

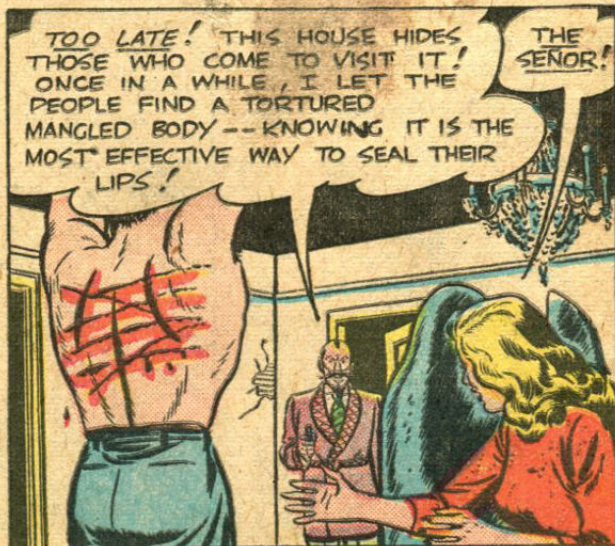
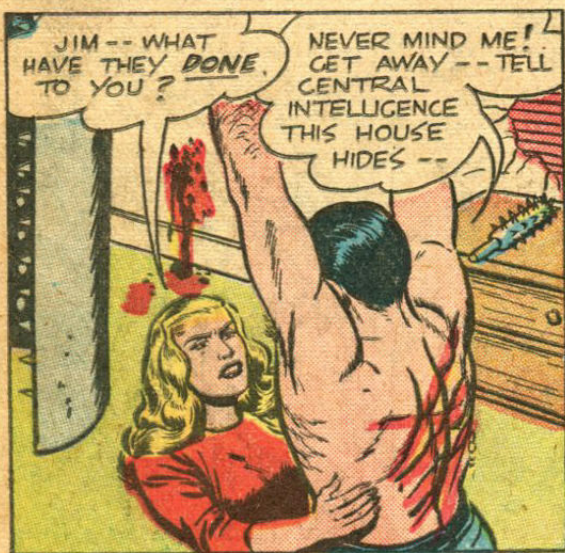
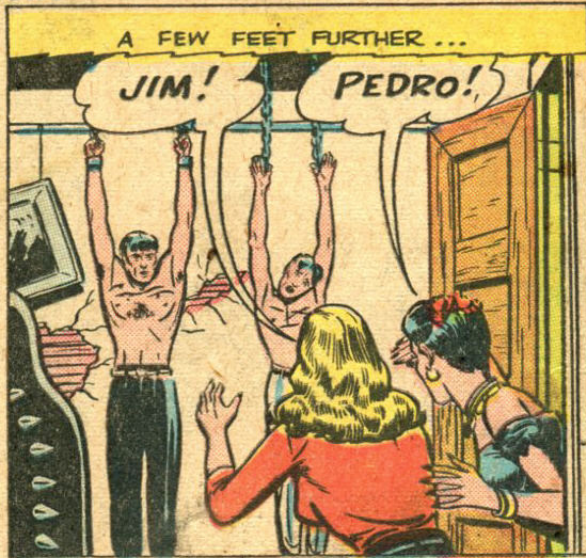
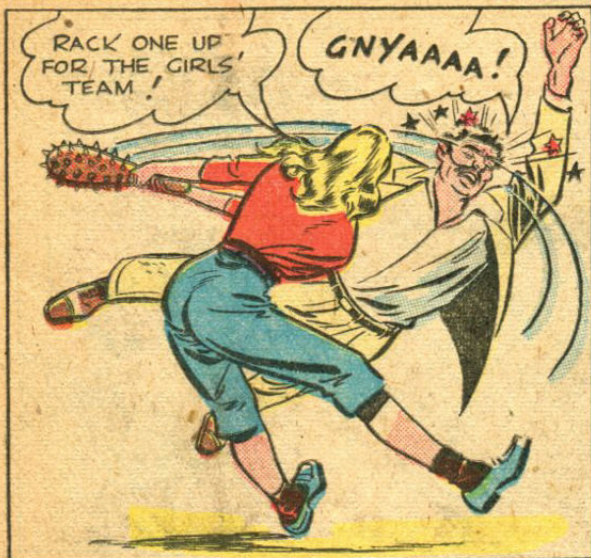


MANHUNT

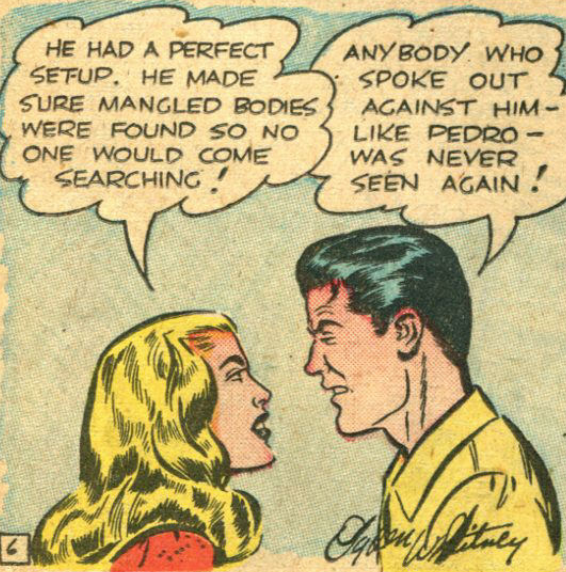
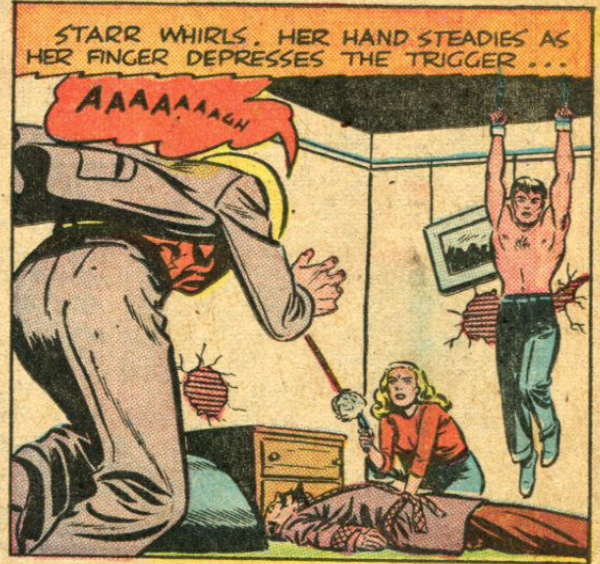


MANHUNT





MANHUNT



The RED FOX

OF THE
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

WHEN YUKON JOE DROPPED GREG MARKEN OVER THE FRISCO SALMON WHARF, WRAPPED IN A HEAVY FISHNET, HE WAS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR AS DEVILISH A SCHEME AS WAS EVER BORN UNDER THE AURORA BOREALIS.

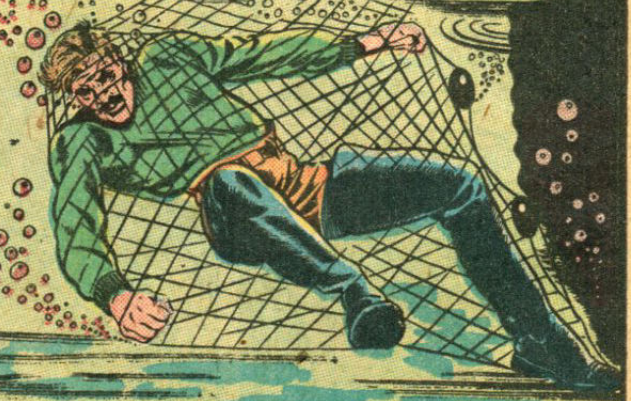
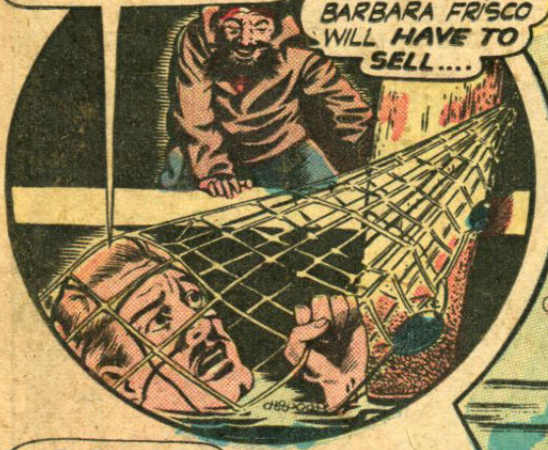
ONLY THE RED FOX STOOD IN THE PATH OF YUKON JOE AND FIENDISH SUCCESS....AND HE WAS TAKEN FOR A RIDE ON.....

"THE FISHING BOATS THAT FAILED!"

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME, JOE! I NEVER HURT YOU...

YOU'RE IN MY WAY, MARKEN. WHEN YOU'RE GONE, BARBARA FRISCO WILL HAVE TO SELL....

A FAINT SPLASH IN THE CANADIAN NIGHT.... THEN SILENCE. AND BENEATH THE OILY EBB OF THE WATER, A MAN FIGHTS OUT HIS LAST FEW SECONDS OF PRECIOUS LIFE....

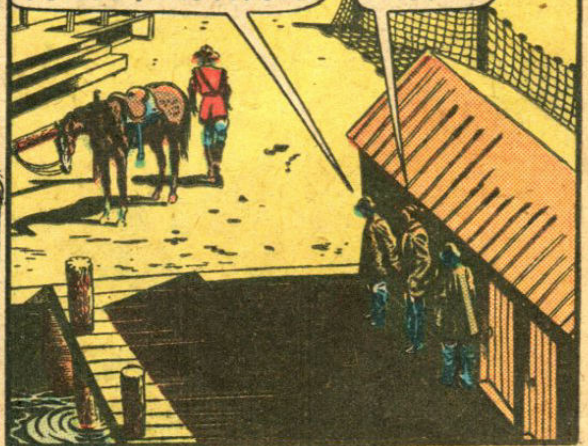


MARKEN KNEW TOO MUCH! WITH HIM OUT OF THE WAY, THERE'S NOBODY TO STOP US FROM GETTIN' THE FRISCO FISHERIES... FOR OUR OWN....

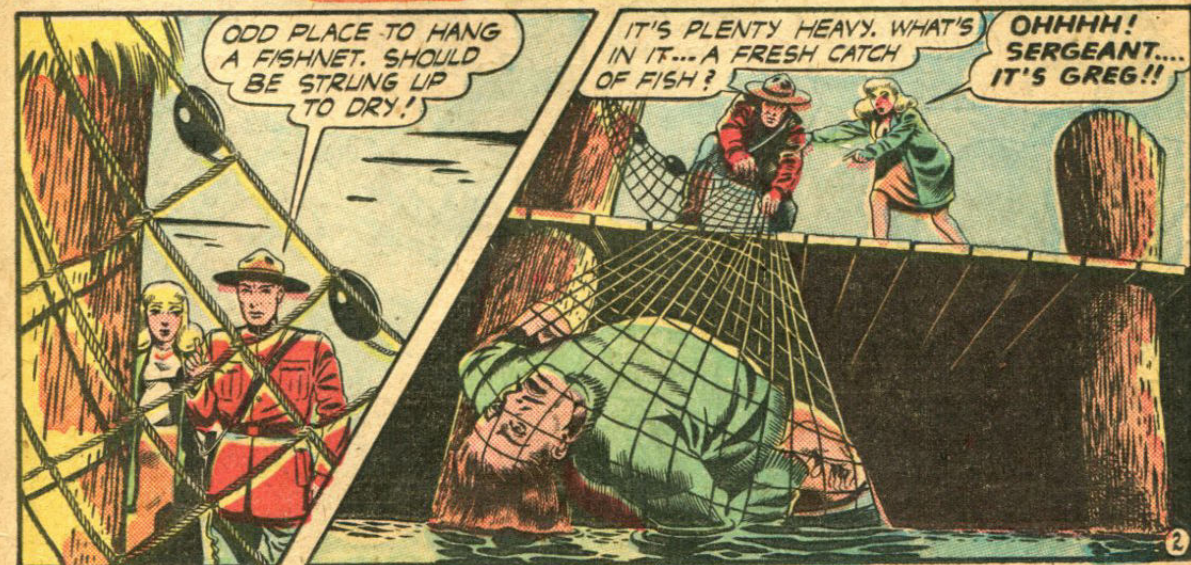
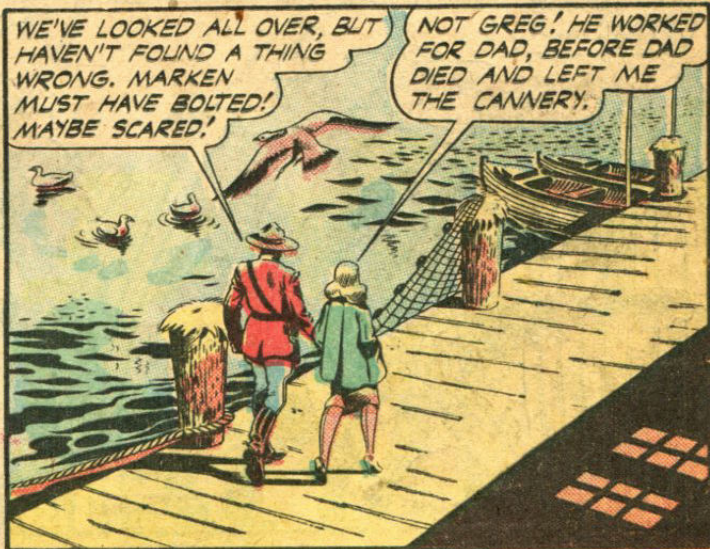
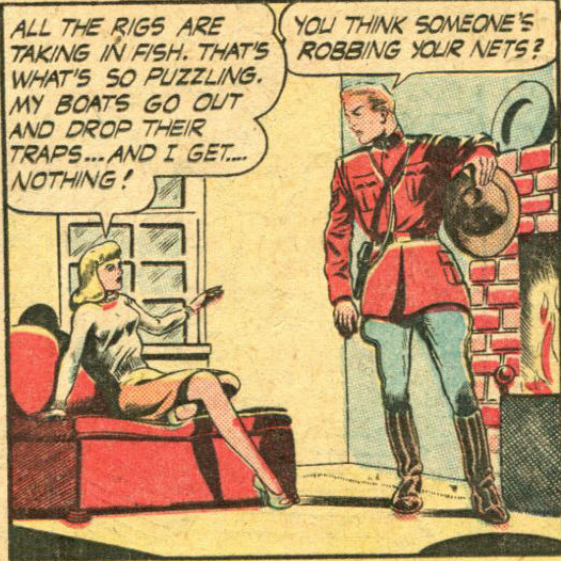


JOE, LOOK! A MOUNTIE! AND HE'S GOIN' INSIDE TO SEE MISS FRISCO!

BAH! WHAT CAN A MOUNTIE DO... WITHOUT PROOF?



MANHUNT



MANHUNT

SOME HOURS LATER...
AT HEADQUARTERS.

NOT A
CLUE,
INSPECTOR!

NOTHING TO
GO ON SER-
GEANT? PER-
HAPS IF YOU
KEPT AN EYE
OPEN ON THE
SEINE-BOATS,
YOU MIGHT
PICK UP INFORM-
ATION!



PULLING OUT FOR
THE SALMON
WATERS
SOON?

IN AN HOUR
OR SO.

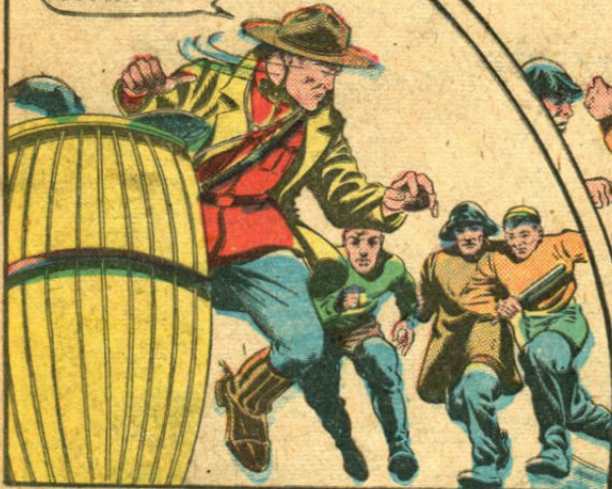


I'LL BORROW A
SLICKER AND
GO ALONG
WITH THEM. IF
I KEEP MY
EARS OPEN, I
MIGHT PICK UP
SOME RUMORS.

WE DON'T WANT
HIM
ON THOSE
SEINE BOATS.
GET RID OF
HIM! USE
ALL THE BOYS
YOU NEED...
BUT FIX
HIM!



WHA.... !!



LOOKS AS THOUGH SOME-
BODY WANTS TO KEEP
ME FROM TAKING A LITTLE
SEA TRIP....!



SO WE'LL LET
THEM TAKE
A TRIP
THEMSELVES!

OW W T C H!

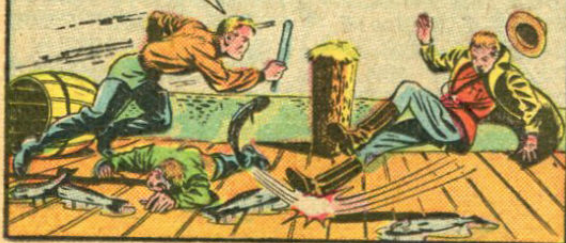


CHIN UP, BIG
BOY!

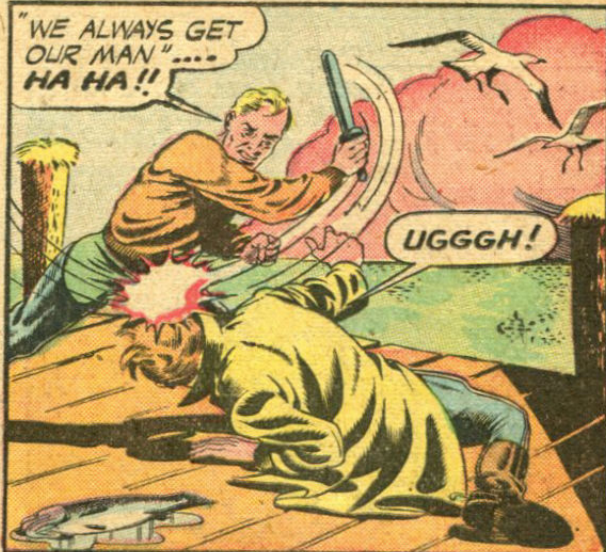


MANHUNT

HE SLIPPED! HE'S A PERFECT SETUP NOW!



"WE ALWAYS GET OUR MAN"
HA HA!!



STEP IT UP! WE'LL TAKE OFF IN THE FOG, WITH THE MOUNTIE OCCUPYIN' A POST OF HONOR!



YOU MAKE A GOOD TARGET ON THE KELP KNIFE, MOUNTIE. WHEN I RAM A WATER-LOGGED BIT OF DRIFTWOOD.... THAT KNIFE'LL CUT YOU IN HALF!!



HANGING HELPLESSLY IN WATER-SOAKED ROPES, THE RED FOX STARES AHEAD OF HIM INTO THE MIST-BLANKETED WATERS... KNOWING THAT ANY SIZABLE OBJECT WILL CHOP HIM ON THE SHARP KELP KNIFE....!

NOT EVEN A DOG'S FIGHTING CHANCE FOR LIFE...



GOT IT STRAIGHT? WE VISIT THE FRISCO BOATS RIGHT AFTER THEY'VE MADE THEIR HAUL! THEY KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOIN' ... SO THERE WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE!



INWARD THROUGH THE EARLY MIST PLODS THE SEINE BOAT, MOTORS WHIRRING...



MANHUNT

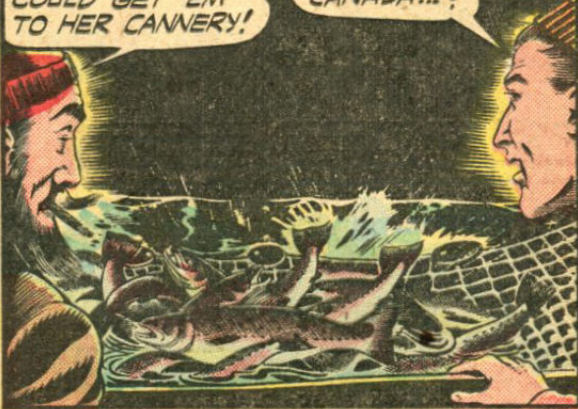


AHOY, FRISCO! YUKON JOE! YOU GOT YOUR CATCH YET?

ALL IN THE NETS, JOE. COME ABOARD!

PLENTY SALMON THERE! ENOUGH TO KEEP THE FRISCO BOATS GOING... IF BARBARA FRISCO COULD GET 'EM TO HER CANNERY!

HA! HA! HOW CAN SHE, WITH YOU AND US BOYS PARTNERS IN THE BIGGEST FISH-STEALIN' RACKET IN CANADA...?



HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT MOLTIE? HEY, MOLTIE? HEY! WHERE'D HE GO? WHERE IS HE?

YUKON JOE FORGOT THAT COLD WATER MAKES CLOTHES SAG! I WAS A GONER UNTIL....



MY COAT... WET AND HEAVY WITH WATER... CLOSE TO MY HAND... IF I CAN GET HOLD OF IT... GRAB MY POCKET-KNIFE...



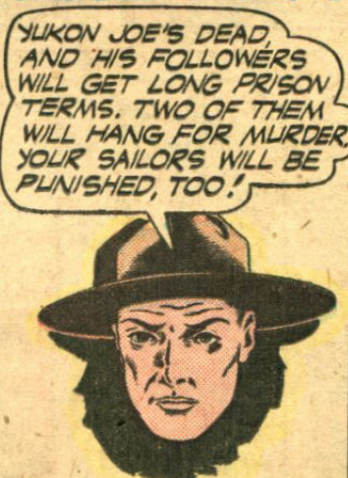
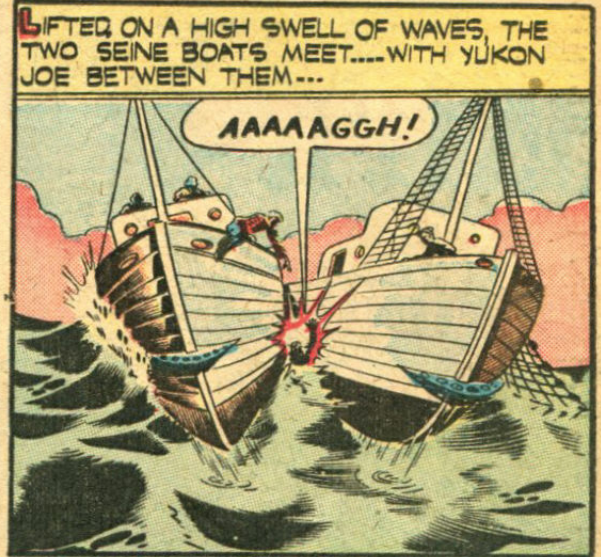
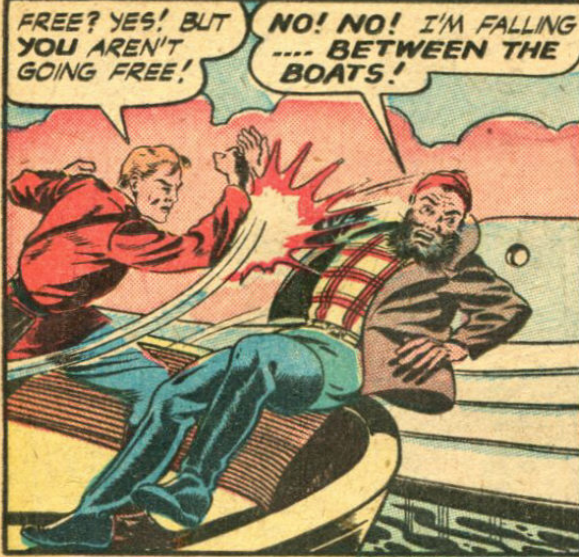
COUPLE OF MORE CUTS AND THE ROPE'LL PART. THEN I'LL SWING OVER ON-TO THE NETS....



HERE I AM, JOE! YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SEEING A GHOST!

YOU... GOT FREE?

MANHUNT



Kirk of Scotland Yard

by
PAUL
MARKER



Death IS A PASSENGER ON THE CRACK GLASGOW LIMITED! SKELETAL FINGERS STRETCH OUT TO TAKE THEIR VICTIM—WHILE INSPECTOR RONALD KIRK OF NEW SCOTLAND YARD IS BAFFLED BY A LACK OF CLUES IN...

"The Case of the Perfect Crime!"

THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN PEERING THROUGH THE CURIO SHOP WINDOW IS LOOKING AT A MURDER WEAPON! IT HAS NOT BEEN USED TO KILL—YET!!

THAT REVOLVER WILL DO—NICELY!



A POUND, THREE SHILLINGS...

HERE IS YOUR MONEY...

CHEAP ENOUGH FOR A MAN'S LIFE!



DICK IS WAITING FOR ME...WE'RE GOING HUNTING TOGETHER... POOR DEAR DOESN'T KNOW THAT I'M—GOING HUNTING ALONE!

CHARING CROSS STATION...!

RIGHTO !!



LATER—AT CHARING CROSS RAILROAD TERMINAL...

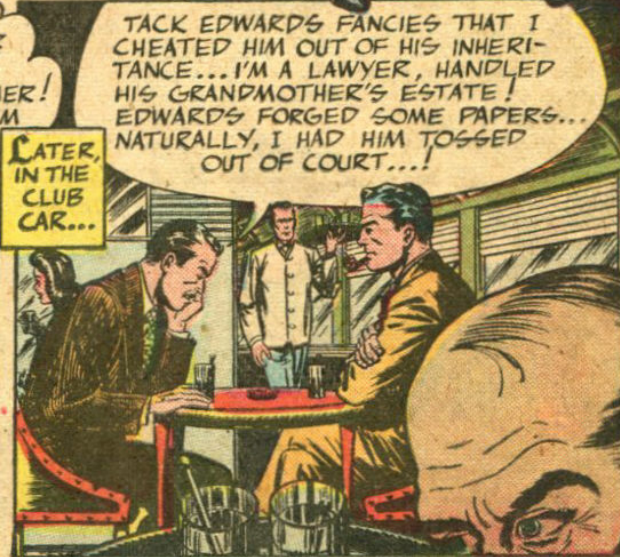
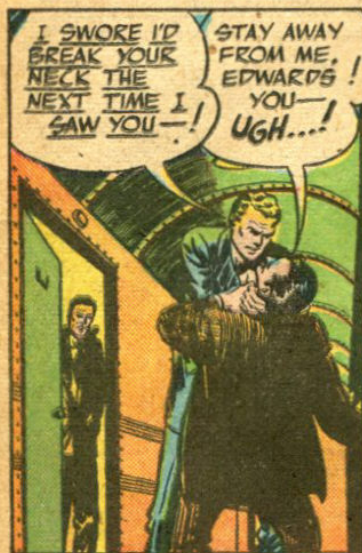
IT'S JUST A FEW DAYS, ANNE... I'LL BE BACK MONDAY...

CARLA—EVERYTHING'S ARRANGED FOR A PERFECT TRIP...SOUND-PROOF COMPARTMENT, GOOD FOOD—EVEN SOME RARE WINES!

DICK—YOU DARLING...!



MANHUNT



MANHUNT



MANHUNT

IN KIRK'S COMPARTMENT...
WHERE HE IS DRESSING FOR
DINNER...



WHEW! EITHER EDWARDS
OR THE GIRL GOT HIM...
BUT I TOOK EDWARDS
GUN FROM HIM...AND I
MADE SURE THE GIRL
WAS IN HER COMPART-
MENT BEFORE I LEFT
HER... THAT LET'S
BOTH OF THEM OUT
AS THE KILLER...



UNLESS EDWARDS
HAD ANOTHER GUN
—OR UNLESS THE GIRL
COULD HAVE BECOME IN-
VISIBLE AND PASSED ME
ON HER WAY THROUGH
THE TRAIN! BOTH OF
WHICH SEEM IMPOSSIBLE
TO SAY THE
LEAST....



MEANWHILE, IN COMPARTMENT 7-K...



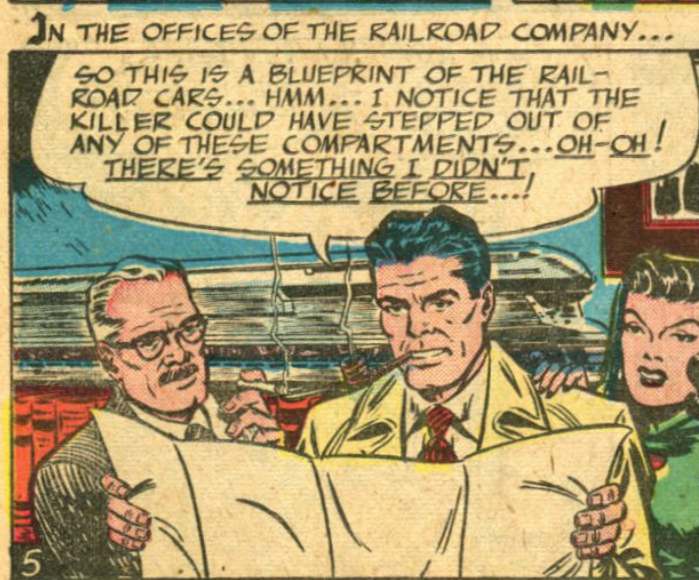
PROBABLY
THE POLICE!
LET THEM
COME...THEY
CAN'T PIN
ANYTHING
ON ME!

I HAVE BAD
NEWS, MRS.
HANELIN...
YOUR HUS-
BAND...

I—I HEARD A
GUNSHOT... IS—
IS HE—DEAD?

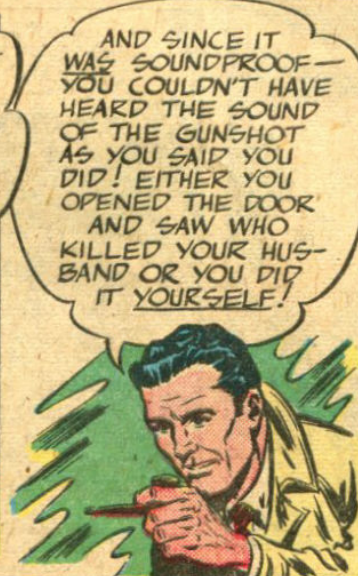
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KNOCK
KNOCK

MANHUNT



MANHUNT

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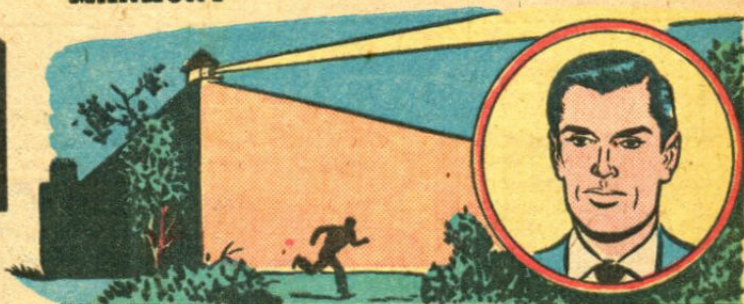


IN THE
NEXT ISSUE OF
MANHUNT
INSPECTOR
KIRK
MEETS
THE
THING
IN THE
MIST!

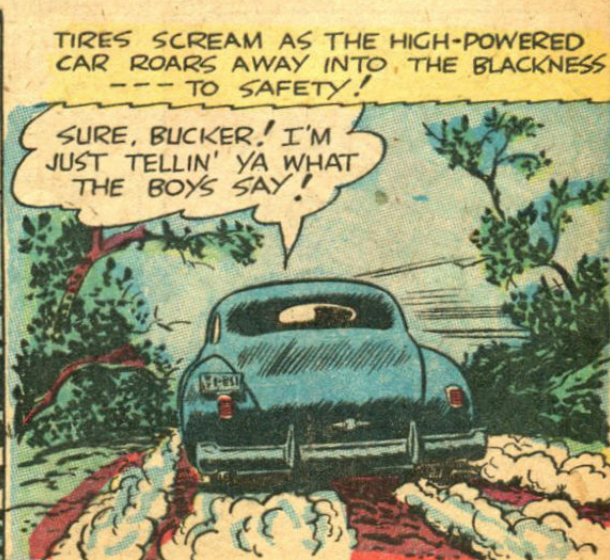
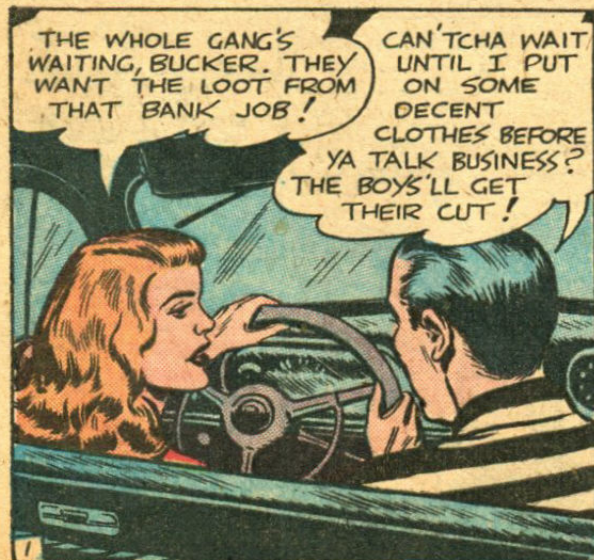
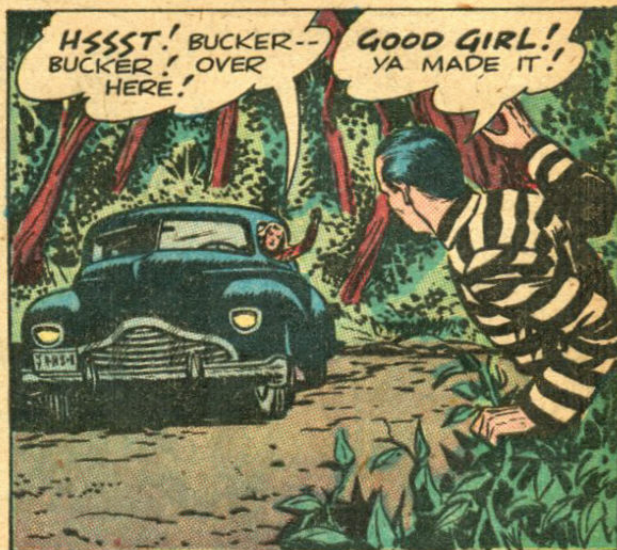
FALLON

OF THE

F.B.I.



THE SHRILL WAIL OF A SIREN HERALDS THE ESCAPE OF A DANGEROUS KILLER FROM THE BIG HOUSE! RIFLES CRACK! HOARSE VOICES CRY WARNING! A SEARCHLIGHT STABS A PENCIL OF LIGHT INTO THE BLACKNESS



TIRES SCREAM AS THE HIGH-POWERED CAR ROARS AWAY INTO THE BLACKNESS --- TO SAFETY!

MANHUNT

A HURRY-UP CALL TO THE F.B.I. BRINGS INSPECTOR JIM FALLON TO THE WARDEN'S OFFICE....

JIM! MIGHTY GLAD TO HAVE YOU ON THIS CASE! BUCKER HADDON GOT AWAY. HE'S ANOTHER DILLINGER! OUR ONLY CLUE -- IS THIS PERFUME VIAL ON MY DESK

HOURS LATER, AT THE F.B.I. LABS...

THERE IT IS, BILL. A PERFUME VIAL. FIND OUT WHAT WAS IN IT, WILL YOU? SMELLS LIKE ACID. I THINK HADDON USED IT TO EAT THE BARS AWAY!

NITRIC ACID, JIM. BUT NOT ONLY THAT --- FACE POWDER! THE KIND THE GIRLS USE ON THEIR CHEEKS TO MAKE THEMSELVES PRETTY!

FACE POWDER?

NEXT AFTERNOON...

HAVE TO HAVE HELP FROM EXPERTS ON THIS. I'LL ASK ANDREA TO TELL ME WHAT POWDER IT IS -- AND WHERE IT WAS BOUGHT!

CAN YOU HELP ME, ANDREA?

HMMM -- SMELLS SOMETHING LIKE L'ENNUI. I'LL HAVE TO CHECK IT, HOWEVER!

L'ENNUI? THAT'S THE FACE POWDER I USE!

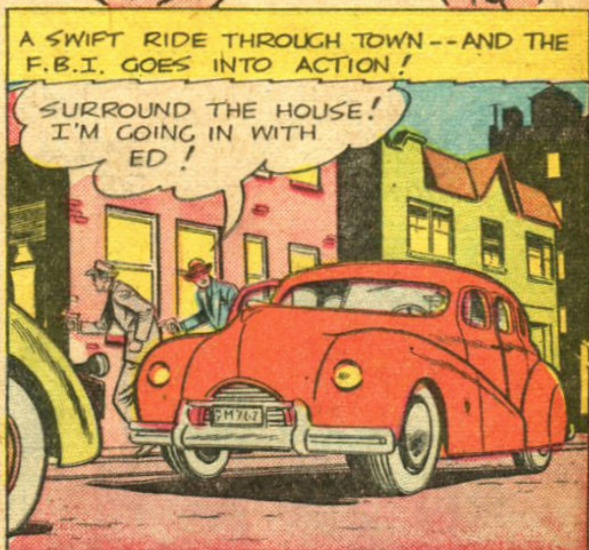
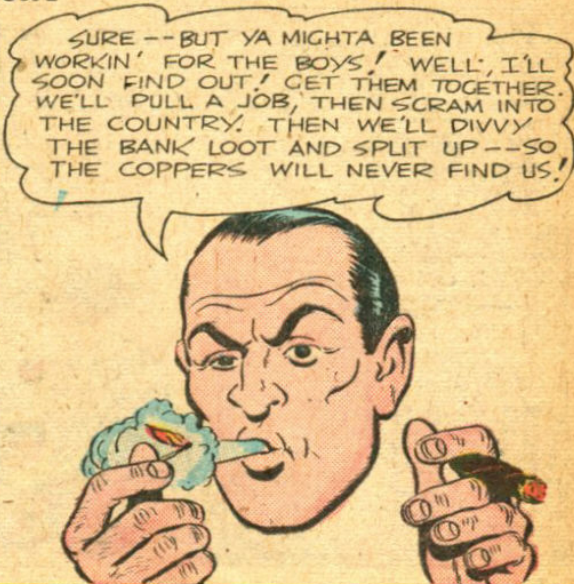
LATER THAT SAME AFTERNOON...

BUCKER -- BUCKER! QUICK -- I JUST SAW A FEDERAL MAN WITH THAT ACID VIAL I SLIPPED YOU IN THE BIG HOUSE!

ARE YOU LYING TO ME? ARE YA? DID THE BOYS PUT YOU UP TO THIS -- TO GET ME TO LEAVE TOWN SO THEY COULD FOLLOW ME AND FIND OUT WHERE I STASHED THE BANK LOOT?

No, No!

MANHUNT

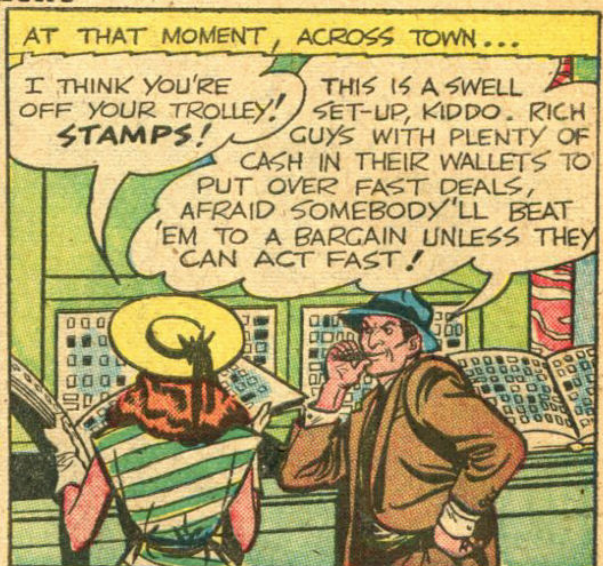


MANHUNT



I DON'T
GET
IT!

BUCKER PROBABLY WANTS
TO MAKE ONE MORE HAUL
BEFORE HE "DRAGS IT"
OUT OF TOWN! THAT
STAMP COLLECTION
CONVENTION IS MADE TO
ORDER FOR HIM!



AT THAT MOMENT, ACROSS TOWN...

I THINK YOU'RE
OFF YOUR TROLLEY!
STAMPS!

THIS IS A SWELL
SET-UP, KIDDO. RICH
GUYS WITH PLENTY OF
CASH IN THEIR WALLET'S TO
PUT OVER FAST DEALS,
AFRAID SOMEBODY'LL BEAT
'EM TO A BARGAIN UNLESS THEY
CAN ACT FAST!

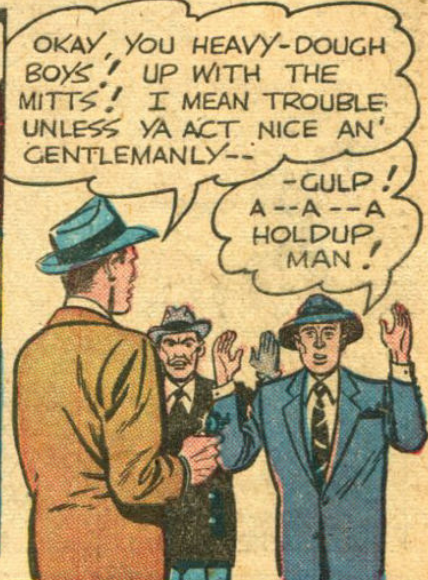


WE TAKE THEIR CASH.
WE PULL THE FAST
ACT, THEN DO A DODGE
OUT OF THE CITY.
THERE'S ONLY ONE
COPPER HERE --



AND I TAKE
CARE OF HIM--
LIKE THIS!

UHHH!



OKAY, YOU HEAVY-DOUGH
BOYS! UP WITH THE
MITTS! I MEAN TROUBLE
UNLESS YA ACT NICE AN'
GENTLEMANLY--

-GULP!
A--A--A
HOLDUP
MAN!



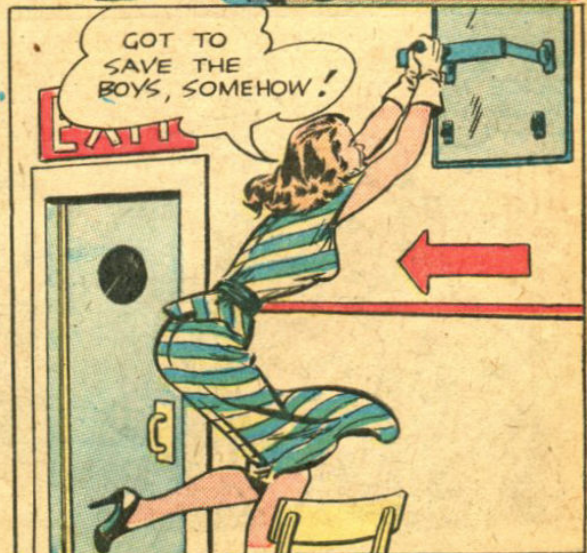
SORRY, DADDYKINS.
BUT BUCKER AND
GRACE NEED THIS
MORE THAN YOU DO!

NEVER MIND THE
CHATTER, GRACE!
SNAP INTO IT!



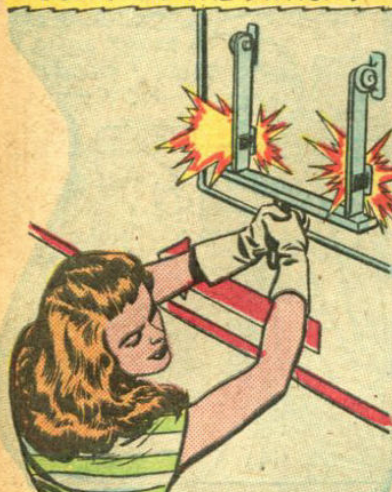
BUCKER'S MEN FILTER THROUGH THE
CROWD, WORKING WITH NIMBLE
FINGERS

MANHUNT



MANHUNT

THE LIGHTS BLINK OUT AS DESPERATE FINGERS YANK DOWN ON THE SWITCH!



QUICK YOU GUYS! THIS WAY--!



HEY!

WHO TURNED OFF THE LIGHTS?

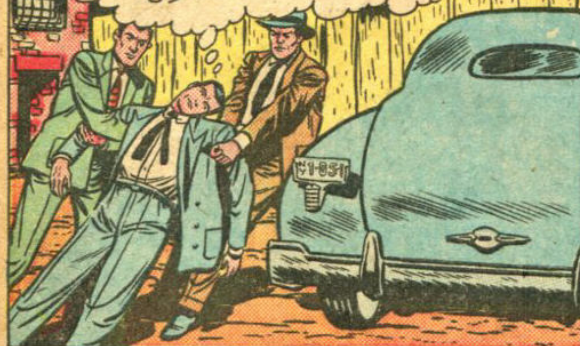
WE'LL TAKE A G-MAN ALONG AS HOSTAGE!

UGGH!



AS THE HALF-CONSCIOUS FALLON IS DRAGGED TOWARD THE POWERFUL GETAWAY CAR, HIS EYES OPEN ...

GOT TO -- DO SOMETHING -- SO THE BOYS WILL -- FOLLOW US --



NOT TAKING ME -- WITH YOU!

OH, NO?



A MUFFLED CURSE. A GUN-BARREL GLINTS IN THE MOONLIGHT. JIM'S FACE TWISTS IN AGONY--

UGGH!



THE GETAWAY CAR LURCHES INTO HIGH, ROARS THROUGH CITY STREETS, UP INTO THE COUNTRY-- TO A TINY LOG CABIN ---

WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH FOR A WHILE. WE'LL DIVVY UP THE STUFF WE GOT, THEN LAM OUT ON OUR OWN!



MANHUNT

FACING CERTAIN DEATH AS THE HALF-CRAZED MOBSTER TIGHTENS HIS TRIGGER FINGER, JIM FALLON'S WITS WORK FURIOUSLY...

BEFORE WE GO, I'M GONNA TAKE CARE OF SMART-BOY HERE!

JUST A SECOND!

WHAT ABOUT THE DOUGH FROM THAT BANK JOB YOU AND THE BOYS PULLED BEFORE YOU WENT TO JAIL? ARE YOU KEEPING THAT?

WHY, YOU-!

HOLD IT, BUCKER! WHAT ABOUT THAT DOUGH? WHERE DID YOU STASH IT?

NEVER MIND THAT! RIGHT NOW--



AS THE MOBSTERS ARGUE, JIM'S STRAINING EARS CATCH THE COUGH OF A MOTORCYCLE EXHAUST, THE DYING THROB OF A MOTOR-- AND SECONDS LATER--

THE DESPERATE BUCKER GOES FOR HIS GUN, A MACHINE-GUN CUTS HIM DOWN WITH A DEADLY HAIL OF LEAD ---

GET 'EM UP, BUCKER! ONE FALSE MOVE AND I'LL DRILL YOU!

THAT GOES FOR THE REST OF YOU PUNKS!

WE AIN'T IN ON THIS! DON'T SHOOT US!

GNYAAA!



I DON'T SEE HOW THE G-BOYS KNEW ABOUT THIS HIDEOUT! IT'S LIKE A MIRACLE!

NO MIRACLE AT ALL. I SPOTTED YOUR CAR, PHONED IN ABOUT IT. THE F.B.I. PICKED UP THE CALL, SENT THEIR BOYS RIGHT OVER

THAT LITTLE "FIGHT" I STAGED GAVE ME THE CHANCE TO BEND BACK THE LICENSE PLATE TO HIDE THE NUMERALS. I ALSO JAMMED MY F.B.I. BADGE ONTO IT-- TO ATTRACT EVEN MORE ATTENTION! CUTE..?



Lefty spun him around as he started for the door.

"I think mebbe you better forget about that call to the police," Lefty snarled. "I don't think they'd be interested in this case at all!" He turned to Pretty-Boy, who was sitting up on the table now, buttoning his shirt.

"Whaddya think, boss?"

"I think you made the smartest move of your life, Lefty!" Pretty-Boy answered, stepping down from the table. "Of all the docs in town you picked out a *plastic surgeon* . . . not bad! Didn't even think of it myself . . . and I'm supposed to be a bright cookie."

Pretty-Boy walked across the room until he stood directly in front of the Doctor. He lowered his head so that he was staring directly into the Doctor's perspiration-soaked face.

"You're gonna do a little fix-up job on this map of mine, understand? I want every feature changed . . . nose, jaw, lips . . . EVERY-THING!"

Lefty's mouth dropped open in amazement, and Pretty-Boy chuckled as he saw the bewilderment on his partner's face.

"You don't know what a bright move you made, Lefty," Pretty-Boy said, a smile brightening the handsome face that had given him his nickname.

"Since the cops are turning the city upside-down to find Pretty-Boy Mahoney . . . I think it would be a good idea to have Pretty-Boy die . . . and he's gonna do just THAT! With Doctor Pullman's help. 'Cause when he gets finished changing my face, my own mother wouldn't recognize me! As far as the cops are concerned, Pretty-Boy Mahoney disappeared tonight. I'm switching characters from now on. When I walk out of this place in a coupla days no cop on earth will recognize me! As far as anyone but the little doc will know . . . I'm Mr. X!"

With Lefty's gun in his ribs Doctor Pullman prepared Pretty-Boy for the operation. He administered the chloroform and Lefty stationed himself at the door to make sure there were no interruptions. In an hour the doctor was finished, and he stepped back from the table, pulled his rubber gloves off and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

Lefty kept his gun levelled at the Doctor's head until Pretty-Boy stirred and sat up. His face was completely swathed in bandages.

"Don't remove those bandages for at least forty-eight hours," the Doctor whispered.

"I'm glad to see that you take such an active interest in your clients," Pretty-Boy said. "In fact, I'm planning to stay here for a few days and let you look after me!"

The succeeding forty-eight hours passed swiftly, with the Doctor removing outer layers of gauze one by one from Pretty-Boy's face . . . until only one layer remained. As he was about to step forward to remove the final layer, Pretty-Boy waved him aside.

"Lefty," he said to his partner, "It's about time we paid off the Doc for his efforts. Suppose you let him have his payment!"

Before the words were out of his mouth, Lefty had emptied his gun into the Doctor's back. Then he turned toward Pretty-Boy, and looked into the muzzle of the other's gun!

"I think that Mr. X should have a really clean slate, Lefty," Pretty-Boy said slowly. "I don't think that *anyone* should know who Mr. X really is!"

His gun barked once . . . twice! Lefty spun on his heel and fell to the floor.

In less than a minute Pretty-Boy had the final layer of gauze peeled from his face. He looked around for a mirror, saw none. His hands went to his nose, his cheeks, his chin, seeking, like the hands of the blind, to ascertain the nature of unfamiliar objects. A sense of elation swept him. His clean-lined nose, with its slightly tilted tip, was gone; under his testing fingers lay a flattened, broad-nostrilled shape. The little dimple had vanished from his round chin, which felt flat and hard. There was a scar of some sort on his right cheek.

He rushed out of the house, exhilarated with success. And as he walked the streets, people stared at him and knitted their brows. "The doc must have given me a real tough mug!" he decided, gleefully. "Swell! Nobody'll recognize Pretty-Boy Mahoney anymore!"

So sure of this was he that, a half-hour later, he even smiled angelically at a policeman. Then the smile froze on his new face as he saw the cop draw his gun and point it right at him. Before he could yank out his own gun he heard a crash and felt the stinging thud of a bullet in his right hand. He cursed wildly and fell to the ground, trying to scramble after his gun. As his finger closed over the butt he felt a dull pain behind his ear and the street began to swim before him.

It must have been ten minutes before he regained consciousness. He was still in the center of the street, but now there was a blue wall of cops standing around him and his hands were manacled.

"You've made an awful mistake . . ." he began.

The cop who had shot him leaned forward.

"Not this time, Pretty-Boy Mahoney," he said. He held a mirror up to Pretty-Boy's face so that the gangster could see his own reflection.

"That plastic surgeon you bumped off gave us a swell lead to your identity, even though you forced him to change your face before you killed him. I think it was very accommodating of him to carve your initials into your face . . . so that we wouldn't forget who you were! Those letters, PBM, cut into your cheek, represent the most thoughtful bequest ever left us by a dead man!"

The End

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INSTRUMENT TO MEET
YOUR EVERY WRITING NEED



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